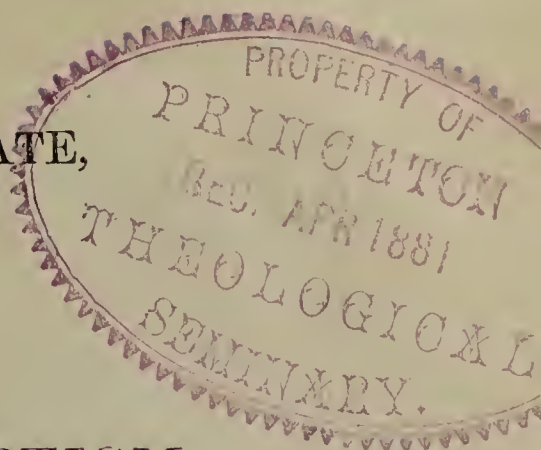


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“AT ANY RATE,



INFANT BAPTISM

IS

NOT FORBIDDEN!”

SECOND EDITION.

By
✓
Mr. R. G. Everett.

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“AT ANY RATE, INFANT BAPTISM IS
NOT FORBIDDEN.”

WITH not a few, this is the stronghold into which they retire when pressed with arguments against the baptism of infants.

Is it so with you? If it is, let me ask you, have you ever thought of the consequences of the principle which you hold? If this be your plea, you must suppose that *every practice in the worship of God which is not forbidden in the Scripiure is lawful*. But whither will not this lead us? If so, why should we not cross ourselves? It is not forbidden. Or use holy water? It is not forbidden. Incense, candles on the altar, and the baptism of bells, with a hundred other fearful superstitions are not forbidden by name in Holy Writ.

But when you say, ‘Infant Baptism is not forbidden,’ have you ever looked at the subject by the light of Christ’s commission to baptize? His commission to baptize runs in these words—“Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples—*margin**) all nations, baptizing

* To the translation “*teach* all nations,” it has been justly objected that it renders two very different words in the Greek, by the same English word—‘Go, *teach* all nations—*teaching* them.’ But by the first word is meant that earliest instruction in the first principles of the Christian faith which is calculated to make converts. (μαθητευω.) By the latter is signified the higher teaching adapted to those who are converts already. (διδασκω.)

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen:" Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.

But you will say perhaps, 'I have often read the passage; and it has nothing to do with the matter. It is true, it does not mention infants by name, but neither does it exclude them. It gives evidence therefore on neither side. It does not, it is true, *command* us to baptize them, but neither does it *forbid*.'

Let us try whether it does not give evidence upon the matter. This is the commission to baptize given by Christ. Have you ever considered what is the meaning of a commission?

Suppose I say to my servant—'Go, gather, and bring me a basket of black grapes.' Would the servant execute his commission if he *sent* another servant with a *dish* of *white* grapes? Of course not! At every step he would have been disobeying orders. The sending another instead of coming himself—the dish instead of the basket—the white grapes instead of the black—would be all so many instances of careless or wilful disobedience. And would it not be reckoned

As objections are made to the view taken to the passage, the principle will be briefly stated and met in this note.

1. First then it is said, that infants, being included in the term "all nations" ought to be baptized. But to this it is replied, that, if so, idiots and infidels are also included in the term, and they also ought to be baptized.

2. It is affirmed, that to baptize is the way to make disciples. But this is contrary to Scripture. Disciples were *made* by Jesus *before they were baptized*. "Jesus *made and baptized more disciples than John*:" John iv, 1.

3. It is objected—'If it had been said, "Go *circumcise* all nations," how readily it would have been understood that the infants were to be included in the command! And why not under the present form of the words?' Because, we answer, the important preceding condition has been omitted—'Go *teach*.' As infants cannot be taught, or accounted disciples, they are excluded. And further because baptism is "*into the name*" of God, that is into a profession of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which infants are incapable of making.

highly impertinent in him, when blamed for not executing his commission, to reply—‘Yes Sir, I have fulfilled your will; what signifies the difference between white grapes and black, between a dish and a basket?’ ‘A great deal (we might make answer,) at least as far as regards *your character for obedience*. How dare you hold my commands so cheap?’

But the servant might defend himself upon the principles of infant baptism so as to defy rebuke—‘I know, Sir, you did not say that white grapes were to be gathered, but you *did not forbid them*.

Would this be true? Nay, at every step the words of the commission shut up all but one way of obedience. When I say—‘Go, gather:’ it supposes that he is to leave the spot which he then occupies, and not to pass on the order to any other of the servants. The command to ‘gather,’ supposes that the bunches are yet on the tree; and if any were already cut, he is not to take them. When I say, ‘bring *grapes*,’ *I forbid all other kinds of fruit*. Had I said, ‘bring me *fruit*,’ nectarines or peaches would have done as well. But when I say ‘grapes,’ the kind of fruit is distinctly pointed out to the exclusion of all others. When I say ‘*black grapes*,’ the kind of grape is fixed, *and all others forbidden*. To bring *white*, were disobedience. Had I named ‘grapes’ alone, the color of them would have been indifferent; but when once the color is fixed, to bring grapes of any other color, is disobedience to the commission.

So then, I argue, it is with the commission to baptize. When Jesus says, “Make disciples of all nations, and baptize them,” *we are forbidden to baptize any who are not disciples*. Are infants then “disciples?” And here we must inquire, what do we mean by a disciple? The lowest meaning of the word is, “one who is instructed by a master.” Since infants then are not instructed, *they are not disciples, and we are forbidden to baptize them by the commission of Christ*. But this is the lowest sense of the word disciple. Let us take its Scriptural meaning, the meaning settled by our Lord himself. None can be the Lord’s disciple he tells

us, who is not willing to surrender all for him, even life itself, and who does not take up his cross and follow after Jesus: Luke xiv, 26, 27. His disciples are those that do the will of God, that love one another, and that bear much fruit: Matt. xii, 48, 49; John xiii, 35; xv, 8. *This supposes faith in the Lord Jesus, and a renewed nature as well as instruction. And therefore in the Acts, the word "disciples" is of the same meaning as "believers:"* Acts xviii, 27; xi, 26; xiii, 52; xx, 7; ix, 19.

And thus it is seen that the baptismal commission in Matthew answers to that in Mark. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved:" Mark xvi, 15, 16. In the above passage, the preaching of the Gospel answers to the teaching supposed; and the believer, to the disciple made by the teaching in question.

Now if infants are not disciples in its very lowest sense, much less are they in its Scriptural sense! THEN BY THE BAPTISMAL COMMISSION, THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS IS FORBIDDEN.

But you shall have Scripture proof that to act otherwise than is commanded, is disobedience in the sight of God. The Most High commanded that his ark should be borne on the shoulders of the tribe of Levi: Deut. x, 8; Num. vii, 9. But David and the people of Israel brought it up from Gibeah on a new cart drawn by oxen: 2, Sam. vi. Here our respective principles are brought to the test. According to yours, *since the manner of carrying the ark was not forbidden, it was lawful.* According to ours, *since God had commanded one way of bearing the ark, all others were forbidden and unlawful.* And does not the issue show who is right? Did not God manifest his displeasure by smiting Uzzah to death, and by the fear which he struck into David and those with him? "And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" ver. 9. Nay, and afterwards, he confesses that the *carrying the ark in another way than that which was commanded was a sin, which drew*

forth God's chastisement. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites and said unto them, ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. *For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order:*" 1 Chron. xv, 11—13.

Here then we find, that to act in a manner not authorized in the commission is unlawful and forbidden. And therefore we say that to baptize any but believers, or in any other way than by immersion, is unlawful and forbidden.

Take another illustration, to show in what light a commission is regarded by men. A commander-in-chief sends a colonel with his regiment to blow up a bridge situated beside a certain village. He marches thither and begins operations; but when the villagers murmur at the destruction of their bridge, he sets the village on fire. He then bids the men, with pickaxes and mining tools, break down one of the arches of the bridge. This done, he returns to the camp. What now is the consequence? He is in peril of his life. He is tried for *disobedience to orders*. His life is in danger on two grounds; first, for *exceeding his commission*, and secondly, *for falling short of it*. Let us now imagine him on his trial, and let us make his defence on the principles on which Infant Baptism is defended. 'Who gave you, Sir, authority to burn the village?' 'Why, general,' he replies, 'I confess that that act was not in the commission, but *neither was it forbidden.*' 'Your defence, Sir, is absurd. Might you do every thing not forbidden in your commission? Why then did you not proclaim yourself king, for neither was that forbidden in your commission?' He is condemned then for *exceeding his commission*. But the trial proceeds. 'You were ordered to blow up the bridge; why have you not done so?' 'I argued with myself, general, that nothing more was meant by the order I had received, than that the bridge should be

rendered unserviceable for the enemy's passage. And I said to myself—Where is the use of wasting so many pounds of powder, when the end can be answered just as well by the pickaxe and mining tools! Would the court-martial be satisfied, think you? Would not the reply be somewhat as follows! 'Sir, you are guilty of disobedience to orders. The command to blow up the bridge, supposed, as you saw clearly, the use of gunpowder, and the refusal to use it, was open disobedience. Your place, Sir, was not to reason, but to obey. Our sentence therefore is, that you be cashiered in presence of the army, and for ever be incapacitated to serve in any office of trust or power.'

May then Christians act, as it regards the baptismal commission, in a way that would bring down upon them cashiering, if tried by the rules of a commission in the army? For the case before us is exactly parallel. By baptizing infants these very two faults are committed. On the one hand, there is an exceeding of the commission: on the other, there is a falling short of it. *To baptize those who are neither instructed nor believe, is an exceeding of the commission: not to baptize those who are instructed and who do believe, is to fall short of the baptismal commission.* Thus Infant Baptism, like every other tradition, makes void the law of God.

II. But we may even suppose, for the sake of argument, that Infant Baptism is right, and yet by the commission before us, every believer ought to be baptized on coming to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Whether Infant Baptism be right or not, the baptism of believers holds good. Even if you were rightly baptized as an infant, yet on becoming a disciple and a believer, you must be baptized again. *The baptism of disciples who believe in Jesus is commanded, and cannot be done away with by the baptizing of those who are NOT DISCIPLES.* It is not denied that Christ might have appointed the baptism of the infants of believers if he would. We only deny that such a command is any where to be found. *But even if he had, such a command could not set aside the*

commission to baptize disciples. There would have been then two baptisms, on different grounds. But the having been baptized in infancy as the infant of a believer, would not excuse from being baptized again—as the disciple, or believer.

Whether then infant baptism be right or not, we call on all who value the authority of the Lord Jesus, to be baptized as disciples and believers.

III. But now a word as to the *manner* of baptism. (1.) That the Greek word means immerse, is granted by very many who practise sprinkling, or pouring. Thus Dr. Wall, who wrote in defence of Infant Baptism—“This [immersion] is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that—as one cannot but pity the weak endeavours of such pædobaptists as would maintain the negative of it—so we ought to disown and show a dislike to the profane scoffs which some people give to the English anti-pædobaptists, merely for the use of dipping, when it was, in all probability, the way by which our blessed Savior—and for certain the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians—did receive their baptism. It is a great want of prudence, as well as of honesty, to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so. It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says.”—*History of Infant Baptism*, part II, chapter ix, section 2.

Professor Campbell—“The word βαπτίζειν both in sacred writers and classical, signifies to *dip*, to *plunge*, to *immerse*, and was rendered by Tertullian—the oldest of the Latin fathers—*tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion.”—*Translation of the Four Gospels on Matt. iv, 11, and note on the place.*

2. But it may be proved, even to the mind of one who does not know Greek, that the word ‘baptize’ signifies immersion, from the prepositions with which it is joined. They are two—‘*in*’ and ‘*into*.’ (ἐν and εἰς.) Now neither of these will agree with the verbs ‘pour,’ or ‘sprinkle.’ We cannot say, “They of Jerusalem were *poured* of him *in* the river Jordan :” (ἐν,) Mark i, 5. Nor can we say—“Jesus came from Nazareth of

Galilee, and was *poured* by John *into* Jordan :” (εἰς,) Mark i, 9.* Nor can we say—“A man was *sprinkled into* Jordan.” And to sprinkle *in* water is never practised. But to immerse agrees fitly with *both* prepositions. I can *immerse* a believer ‘*in* a river,’ or ‘*into* a river.’

3. Or, again, we can prove the true manner of baptism from the figures made use of to represent it. Baptism is compared to a *birth*: John iii, 5. Then is the water the womb from whence the believer issues. This of course supposes him to be entirely beneath the water before he comes forth. It is compared to a *burial*: Rom. vi, 4; Col. ii, 12. And this also supposes him entirely covered beneath the water.

4. Or again, to the churchman, we might prove it from the Church of England Prayer Book. Thus, in the ‘Public Baptism of Infants,’ we read, “If they shall certify him that the child may well endure it, *he shall dip it in the water* discreetly and wisely.”

So in the order for private Baptism. “Let the priest baptize it in the form before appointed for public baptism of infants; saving, that *at the dipping of the child in the font*, he shall use this form of words.”

Again, in the order for Adult Baptism—

“Then shall the priest take each person to be baptized by the right hand, . . . and *then shall dip him in the water*, or pour water upon him.”

Again, in the Catechism—

“Water, *WHEREIN* the person is baptized.”

I would, therefore, solemnly call upon all believers, on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, (whether they think themselves baptized in infancy or not,) to be immersed as believers, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

* On which passage hear the note of Dr. Bloomfield, the learned editor of the New Testament, and Vicar of Bisbrooke. “Εἰς is not here for ἐν, as most commentators imagine, who adduce examples which are quite inapposite. The sense of εἰς is, ‘WAS DIPPED,’ or ‘PLUNGED INTO.’” “The sense here may be, ‘He underwent the rite of baptism (by being plunged) into the water.’” Note on Mark i, 9.

But some reply—‘ Well, after all, though I think you are right, yet it is not *essential*. At all events, baptism is not a *saving ordinance*.’

Are these the words of a believer? a son of God? This breathes the spirit, not of a son, but of a slave, who will do no more than he is compelled, and will neglect everything to which he is not urged by fear of the lash! Certain it is, that such a one, if he repent not, will be ashamed before Christ at his coming. For it is written, “ Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father which is in heaven. But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven :” Matt. x, 32, 33. And again—“ For whosoever shall *be ashamed* of me and of *my words*, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s and of the holy angels :” Luke ix, 26.

Baptism is of more importance than many are willing to confess. Our race was originally tried by a positive command from God. “ Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it :” Gen. ii, 17. Adam did eat of it, and fell. How seemingly trifling in the eyes of many was the command! But its consequences, how vast!

Even so God tries believers again by a positive command. As though he said—‘ I will manifest who are my children, and who are the children of perverse Adam. His wickedness was displayed by disobedience to a positive command. The renewed nature of believers in my Son, shall be shown on the contrary, by their obedience to a positive command.’

If, therefore, you see that the baptism of believers is right, and yet do not fulfil it, you are taking part with the rebel forefather of mankind against the holy and obedient Jesus.

No argument can be brought against baptism that would not equally avail against the forbidding of the tree of knowledge. Yea, your very plea is, in other words, what Satan whispered to Eve, as the ground of her rebellion—‘ *It is not a saving ordinance*.’ That is,

'I shall not perish eternally, if I disobey.' So said the Serpent.—*'Eat the fruit, Eve, you shall not die.'*

What think you? Can the Christian stand on this ground of death? What is this, but the temptation with which Satan assailed the Savior?—"Cast thyself down, for it is written, he shall give his angels charge over thee." But what saith the Savior?—"Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God."

A positive law was Adam's trial. A positive law is your trial now. To neglect it, is to display the nature of the old Adam. To fulfil it in faith, shows the nature of the second Adam.

The outward act, as we confess, is indeed nothing, except the heart go with it. But God also accounts it vain to profess obedience without actions accordant therewith. He esteems it the pretence of charity to say to the needy—"Be warmed and filled," and yet not to give. He esteems it the pretence of obedience to say, Lord, Lord, and *yet not to do the things which he says*. How solemn the ground on which baptism rests! "ALL AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO ME IN HEAVEN AND EARTH. Go ye, *therefore*, and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them*." Do you love the Lord Jesus? Let him see that your love is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. You know the proof of love which he requires—"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

THE END.